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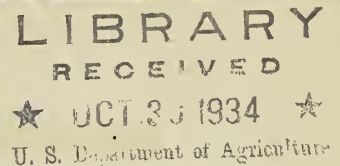
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

School Lunches



A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, October 11, 1934.

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MR. TEUTON: Now for the Household Calendar, with Miss Ruth Van Demand presiding as usual. Miss Van Deman, it was mighty nice of you to let the Farm Credit Administration have your time on Tuesday. Hope the change didn't inconvenience you.

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, indeed, not in the least, Mr. Teuton. You know a household schedule is nothing if not flexible. I'd planned to talk about school lunches this week and I believe that's just as good a topic for Thursday as for Tuesday.

MR. TEUTON: Well, I know several youngsters who'd agree with you, Miss Van Deman. School lunch day for them is five days a week. By the way, have you been around to visit any of the emergency school lunch rooms this fall?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I have. One day last week I dropped in at a school where 135 boys and girls were having a hot lunch served to them. I hadn't had my own lunch and I got hungrier and hungrier as I watched those youngsters eating. Their tomato and macaroni soup certainly looked good and smelled simply tantalizing.

MR. TEUTON: I'll bet it did. Was the soup made right there at the school?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, all the cooking for these school lunches is done at a central kitchen, and the food is packed and sent around the city in trucks. Early one morning last week, I paid a visit to the kitchen where the food for the school lunches is prepared. Enough of everything for 6000 children.

MR. TEUTON: Whew, school lunches for 6000 children, did you say? That's some job.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, but I tell you any efficiency engineer would be pleased with the smooth orderly way things were moving forward in that kitchen. In one room there were 14 big kettles, each one holding about 30 gallons of savory vegetable soup. Six kinds of vegetables were in it. I know because I asked for the list, Carrots, cabbage, onions, potatoes, canned corn, and tomatoes, all cooked together in beef broth. All the meat had been stripped from the soup bones, ground, and put back into the soup. A woman in a clean cotton dress and cap stood in front of each kettle stirring the soup with a long paddle to keep it from scorching. And at one side of the room a man was busy sterilizing the big aluminum cans over a jet of live steam, getting them ready for the soup to be poured in through the wide spigots in the soup kettles. It's surprising, the home economics director said, how long the soup in those heavy metal cans will stay hot if its boiling when it goes in.

(over)

MR. TEUTON: Is soup the only hot dish they make in this kitchen?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh, no. The menu varies, but one hot dish is all they attempt in a day. Sometimes for this hot dish, they have lima beans cooked with ham. Or maybe it will be meat and spaghetti and tomatoes, or macaroni and cheese. As a rule though, the children seem to like their cheese best served in the piece, so they can pick it up and eat it as though it were candy.

MR. TEUTON: What about sandwiches, Miss Van Deman? Don't tell me there's no sandwich counter in this school lunch kitchen.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Indeed there is. But of course with a hot substantial dish as the center of the meal, bread and butter sandwiches are best. In a separate room away from the steam soup kettles we saw more women in clean wash dresses and caps spreading bread generously with smooth yellow butter.

MR. TEUTON: How do they make it so smooth?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Why they use an electric mixer, work it in that for a few minutes and it's soft and easy to spread. (It made me smile to think back to the times I used to try to spread hard cold lumps of butter on bread for the sandwiches I took to high school.) Of course these sandwiches are all counted and packed just as many to each big clean paper bag. The bags are labeled with the name of each school, and arranged in such and such order, according to the routes the delivery trucks take. There is one sandwich apiece for each child, and with every six in goes one extra for the very hungry boy or girl.

MR. TEUTON: Um-m. Must take lots of arithmetic and head work to run a school lunch project doesn't it?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Indeed so. Schedules are posted all around, so every person there understands his job. We went last to the room near the back door where the fruit was all counted out in bags and labeled for each school. Bananas were the fruit that day, and the director told us what a chore it had been to get 6000 bananas all the same size and all ripe enough to serve the same day. Sometimes apples are the fruit, sometimes oranges, and other times canned or stewed dried fruit is on the menu. Whenever possible they serve a fresh fruit, one rice in vitamins.

MR. TEUTON: What about milk? Is that delivered directly to the schools?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, every child has a half pint bottle of Grade A milk every noon as part of his lunch.

MR. TEUTON: And a straw to drink it through?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, a straw inserted through a hole in the paper cap on the bottle. Now just let me run over the whole plan for the lunch. I'll reverse the order and start with milk this time - a half pint bottle for every child every day. Then a good sized serving of a savory hot dish. A sandwich, most of the time just slices of bread generously spread with butter. Sometimes a cube of cheese, and now and then strips of crisp raw carrot, because of its richness in vitamins. And fruit - fresh, dried, or canned, whichever, the market and the budget afford.

MR. TEUTON: Well, that sounds like a mighty good lunch. Miss. Van Deman, doesn't the Bureau of Home Economics have some menus and recipes for school lunches?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, Mr. Teuton, we have a mimeographed pamphlet called "School lunches, with recipes to serve 50 children." We'll be glad to send it to any group of teachers or parents interested in a school lunch project.

And goodbye, Everybody, for this time.

